

Editors' Introduction: Lateral Changes

by Robert F. Carley, André M. Carrington, Eero Laine, Yumi Pak, SAJ, Alyson K. Spurgas and Chris Alen Sula | Issue 12.1 (Spring 2023)

ABSTRACT This issue marks the addition of a new co-editor and several special projects, including *Lateral's* first podcast, *Positions*. This issue presents two important sections of work, both building on conversations in the field and across publications: "The Black Shoals Dossier," curated by Beenash Jafri, and the second part of "Crip Pandemic Life," edited by Alyson Patsavas and Theodora Danylevich. In addition to these impressive sections, the issue features three research articles and ten book reviews.

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As an open access, peer reviewed publication that is run entirely on volunteer labor, *Lateral* is necessarily driven by the energy and ideas of those who make up its community: editors, authors, reviewers, Cultural Studies Association members, and many others at the center of and on the edges of the broad field of cultural studies. This makes the journal both entirely precarious, built upon and necessitating the good will of those who labor for it, and fiercely resilient, as those who contribute often do so because they believe in the work of *Lateral* and see the good that comes from a coalitional publishing model.

This issue of the journal arrives amidst the early stages of many other projects that stem from *Lateral's* modes of collaborative, accessible research, and publication. We are quite excited to announce a new open access book series with Amherst University Press. The series, *Emergent Ideas: Lateral Books in Cultural Studies*, offers provocations to the broad field of cultural studies through short, yet theoretically compelling books. Titles in the series will endeavor to remap conceptual terrains of culture in order to better comprehend the complex relations that produce meanings, engender practices, shape emergent relations, and give rise to new social and political subjects. Edited by Robert Carley, Anne Donlon, SAJ, Eero Laine, and Chris Alen Sula, the new book series sets out to stage arguments for a future cultural studies. Like the journal, the books will be open access and freely accessible, opening readership beyond researcher backgrounds, classrooms, and institutional bounds.

The journal itself is expanding in a number of other ways. Notably there are three new sections, all in different modalities: a special section, a new recurring section of the journal, and in several firsts for *Lateral*, a post-publication peer-reviewed podcast. The first episode from *Positions*, "[For the Moment, I Am Not Scrolling](#)," <
<https://csalateral.org/podcasts/positions/for-the-moment-i-am-not-scrolling-culp-skinner-kuntsman-miyake-karppi/>> places Adi Kuntzman and Esperanza Miyake, authors of *Paradoxes of Digital Disengagement: In Search of the Opt-Out Button* (University of Westminster Press, 2022) in conversation with Andrew Culp, Claudia Skinner, and the CSA's New Media & Digital Cultures Working Group, with a scholarly commentary by Tero Karppi, "The Misunderstanding(s) of Disconnection Studies." This work is also the first model of post-publication peer review by the journal, with the conversation transcript finalized before the review, and the two published alongside each other in this issue. Future episodes of *Positions*, led by Mark Nunes and Elaine Venter, will similarly rotate through topics and hosts from different [Cultural Studies Association working groups](#) <
<https://www.culturalstudiesassociation.org/working-groups.html>>, highlighting new and critical ideas, and showcasing the analytical tools of cultural studies.

An upcoming special section on "Digital Platforms and Agency" is particularly compelling to *Lateral* as the journal expands and develops across projects and as infrastructure itself. Section editors Elaine Venter and Reid Van Schenck ask contributors to consider the relationship between structured power and empowered practices in answering important questions about media, digital platforms, and agency. [Abstracts are invited through June 30, 2023](#) < <https://csalateral.org/upcoming/#digital-platforms-agency>> .

A new section of the journal aims to open important dialogue through staying, revisiting, returning, lingering with those key concepts and words that structure much of the critical work of cultural studies. "Aporias" is an open and ongoing section of the journal and it invites description and debate of key concepts and contradictions in cultural studies. Envisioned as a site of disciplinary memory and a locus for review of the field, this section asks us to "stay[] with the trouble just a bit longer." [The deadline is rolling](#) <
<https://csalateral.org/upcoming/#aporias>> .

These projects were developed through our new [proposal process for emergent initiatives](#) < <https://csalateral.org/contribute/#projects>> . We imagine *Lateral* as a place for CSA members and cultural studies scholars and practitioners to think and make and create work together and we are always interested in discussing ideas for how *Lateral* might support and develop the field of cultural studies.

The co-editors of *Lateral* are very happy to welcome Dr. Yumi Pak to the co-editing team. Yumi is an Associate Professor of Black Studies at Occidental College, whose [work](#) <
<https://csalateral.org/issue/9-2/from-gwangju-to-brixton-impossible-translation-han-kang->

[human-acts-pak/](#)> was previously published in *Lateral*. Yumi has been working with the journal as a co-editor since the beginning of 2023. Even in that short amount of time, her contributions have already benefited the journal and work published in it.

Lateral's existing project [Years in Cultural Studies](https://csalateral.org/years/) < <https://csalateral.org/years/>> will be calling for a new section editor. A corollary and transformation to existing canonical frameworks¹, presenting the opportunity to revisit as well as revise our field's history. Each of the current publications in this section focuses on a particular year in order to excavate the buried (at times, deliberately so) innovations, demands, and debates that have shaped the field of cultural studies today. While the section currently contains entries for 1956, 1968, 1983, 1986, 1988, and 1990, other years and multiple entries for the same year are welcome, and new editor(s) are invited to propose further shape to this section according to their vision.

This issue contains two important sections of work, both building on conversations in the field and across publications. The first, "[The Black Shoals Dossier](#)," < <https://csalateral.org/issue/12-1/black-shoals-dossier/>> curated by Beenash Jafri, is a conversation between Tiffany Lethabo King and Stephanie Latty, Stephanie Lumsden, Karyn Recollet, and Megan Scribe about King's *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*. In this exchange the authors explore and build forms of "feminist and queer care...craft[ed] with and for each other," working against registers of academic and state capture, discipline, and blockade. The other is the third iteration of work curated and edited by Alyson Patsavas and Theodora Danylevich. The first, "[Cripistemologies of Crisis: Emergent Knowledges for the Present](#)" < <https://csalateral.org/archive/section/cripistemologies-of-crisis/>>," was published in 2021, as COVID vaccines were slowly and unevenly rolling out across the world. It was followed by [Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry](#) < <https://csalateral.org/archive/section/crip-pandemic-life/>> in the fall of 2022, and it now concludes "With Grief and Joy—Crip Pandemic Life: A Tapestry, Part II." In this section, the editors Theodora Danylevich and Alyson Patsavas continue their work of documenting crip culture, in the process understanding their section as creating transformative access to and with the archive. Yet, even as this project draws to a close, the work it represents continues, daily and in flux with the changing conditions of an ongoing and overlapping crises.

In addition to these impressive sections, the issue features three research articles that each develop important strains of thought within cultural studies and *Lateral's* publication history. Nathan Burns considers key concepts and filmographies of queer cinema, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in "'It Means Possibility': Manifestations of Isolation in New Queer Cinema." Burns argues that isolation is both a key thematic in queer cinema since the early 1990s and holds immense potential in imagining queer futures and

possibilities. Ian VanderMeulen's article, "Hearing the Houma: Sound, Vision, and Urban Space in Moroccan Hip-Hop Videos," builds on and expands vital conversations around hip-hop as a musical genre and political force. Centering the analysis on representations of urbanity and class in Moroccan music videos, VanderMeulen makes important connections across aural and visual aspects of hip-hop amidst ongoing discussions and arguments related to the connection between culture, power, and resistance. Finally, Philippe Néméh-Nombré complicates geography and history in "Canada's Colonial and Genocidal Project Begins in Africa." Néméh-Nombré offers intertwined readings of key scenes in the transatlantic slave trade and colonial violence. Considering the ways these scenes have been held separately and distinct from each other, Néméh-Nombré rather unsteadies the even and sequential histories that attempt to neatly contain the violent past.

We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with so many from various parts of the broad field of cultural studies. The work in this issue is driven by the work and interest of its community of scholars, activists, and artists. We hope you'll join us for the work ahead.

Notes

1. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) ↩
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SAJ

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